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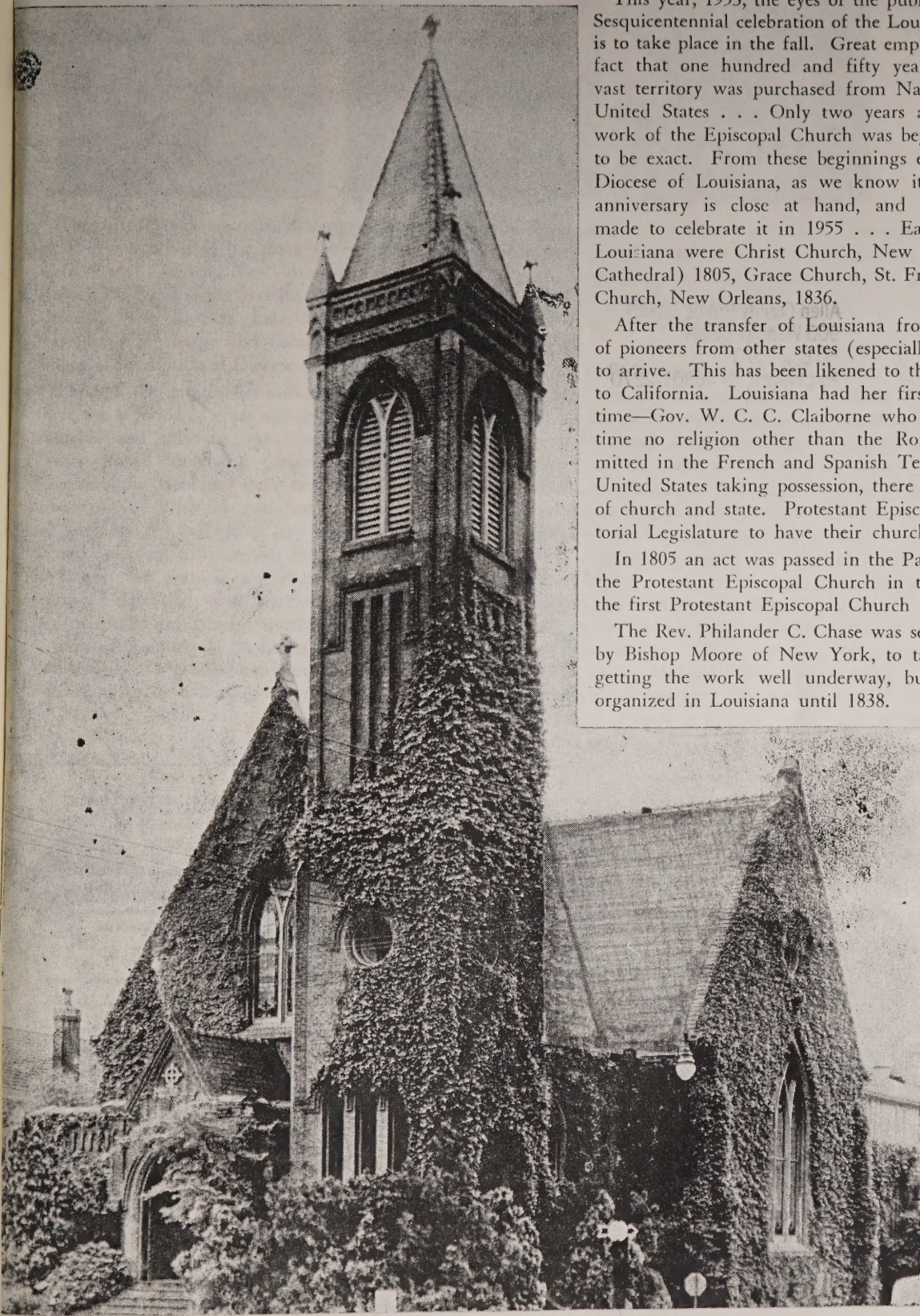
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ST. JAMES EPISCOPAL CHURCH---

A GLIMPSE AT ITS HISTORY

By MRS. C. E. COATES

*Historian for the Diocesan Episcopal Women's Auxiliary and a Member
of the Diocesan Historical Committee*



This year, 1953, the eyes of the public are being trained upon the Sesquicentennial celebration of the Louisiana Purchase of 1803 which is to take place in the fall. Great emphasis is being placed upon the fact that one hundred and fifty years have transpired since this vast territory was purchased from Napoleon by Livingston for the United States . . . Only two years after the Louisiana Purchase, work of the Episcopal Church was begun in this territory—in 1805 to be exact. From these beginnings eventually grew the Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana, as we know it today. Its Sesquicentennial anniversary is close at hand, and preliminary plans are being made to celebrate it in 1955 . . . Earliest among the churches in Louisiana were Christ Church, New Orleans (now Christ Church Cathedral) 1805, Grace Church, St. Francisville, 1826 and St. Paul's Church, New Orleans, 1836.

After the transfer of Louisiana from France in 1803, an influx of pioneers from other states (especially from New England) began to arrive. This has been likened to the rush of the "Forty Niners" to California. Louisiana had her first American governor at that time—Gov. W. C. C. Claiborne who was a Protestant. Until that time no religion other than the Roman Catholic faith was permitted in the French and Spanish Territory of Orleans. With the United States taking possession, there came an automatic separation of church and state. Protestant Episcopalians applied to the Territorial Legislature to have their church incorporated.

In 1805 an act was passed in the Parish of Orleans, incorporating the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States. This was the first Protestant Episcopal Church in the Mississippi Valley.

The Rev. Philander C. Chase was sent from Poughkeepsie, N. Y. by Bishop Moore of New York, to take charge. He succeeded in getting the work well underway, but the church was not fully organized in Louisiana until 1838.

Shown here is the beautiful, gracious and historic St. James Episcopal Church on Fourth Street as it looked until a few years ago when the ivy vines that covered it were cut. In 1944, St. James Parish celebrated its Centennial . . . marking 100 years of love, service and progress to the people of Baton Rouge.

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH— A GLIMPSE AT ITS HISTORY

BY THE REV. C. C. COOPER

Illustrations by the Rev. Canon Thomas Howard, D.D., and W. H. H. H.

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH PUBLICATIONS

The book, first published in 1884, is a history of the Episcopal Church in the United States, from its beginning in the year 1520, when the first English missionaries came to America, to the present time. It is a history of the growth and development of the Church, and of the work of its members in the world. The book is written in a simple and straightforward manner, and is suitable for reading by all who are interested in the history of the Church.

The book is divided into two parts. The first part, which is the larger of the two, is a history of the Church in the United States. It begins with the first English missionaries who came to America in 1520, and follows the growth and development of the Church through the years. It covers the work of the missionaries, the establishment of the first churches, and the growth of the Church in the various parts of the country. The second part of the book is a history of the Church in the world. It begins with the first English missionaries who came to the West Indies in 1492, and follows the growth and development of the Church in the various parts of the world. It covers the work of the missionaries, the establishment of the first churches, and the growth of the Church in the various parts of the world.

The book is a valuable history of the Episcopal Church, and is suitable for reading by all who are interested in the history of the Church. It is a history of the growth and development of the Church, and of the work of its members in the world. The book is written in a simple and straightforward manner, and is suitable for reading by all who are interested in the history of the Church.

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Three beautiful Tiffany stained glass windows are in the sanctuary above the altar and dedicated "To the Glory of God and in loving memory of Eleanor Garig Connell and Elvira Dougherty Garig, Easter 1910."

The first Diocesan convention was held in 1839, consisting of the three church parishes, Christ Church, New Orleans, Grace Church, St. Francisville and St. Paul's, New Orleans. The R. Rev. Leonidas K. Polk was placed in charge and became the first Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana.

Through the late thirties and early forties, there was a period of great activity and many churches and missions were begun under Bishop Polk's leadership. Many of these have recently celebrated their centennial anniversaries . . . With this preliminary preface, we come to the subject of our sketch—St. James Episcopal Church of Baton Rouge. Its charter was granted in 1844 and its Centennial Celebration was observed in 1944 with a special anniversary service . . . Prior to the final granting of St. James' charter we find records of a group of earnest individuals attempting to form a church parish as early as 1819.

In 1819 a Mr. William Jennison, a licensed

lay reader from Boston, was teacher and lay reader among a group of Baton Rougeans for three years. This group was incorporated in 1820, as the "Episcopal Congregation of Baton Rouge, La." This charter expired however in 1830.

In January of 1840, the Rev. William R. Lacey, D.D., of Pennsylvania and the Rev. Roderick H. Ranney of Louisiana, came to Baton Rouge to be president of the College of Baton Rouge and professor of romance languages and mathematics, respectively. These two clergymen helped to permanently establish services of the Episcopal church as early as 1840. Continuous work of the church was then begun.

In those early years services were held in the "Garrison", as the United States military barracks were then called. Gen. Zachary Taylor, the hero of the Mexican War, was in military command of the post. His home was on the garrison grounds at a point overlooking the river on the site of the present

Louisiana State Capitol grounds—the former Louisiana State University Campus with its historic past.

It will be recalled that the General was called to the presidency of the United States from this home in Baton Rouge. (See Holman Hamilton's "Zachary Taylor in the White House".) Quoting from this: "The General was not a church member, but his wife adhered to the Episcopal faith. It was she who sponsored religious services at the forts commanded by her husband and St. James Parish, Baton Rouge had no more regular communicant." . . . Missing the services of her own church, Mrs. Taylor requested permission to fit up a room in the garrison for a chapel. This permission was granted and services were held with the Rev. Mr. Lacey and the Rev. Mr. Ranney officiating . . . Mrs. W. B. Clarke (Miss Julia French Edwards) tells that two of her mother's babies were christened in this little chapel. Her grandfather, Dr. Cornelius

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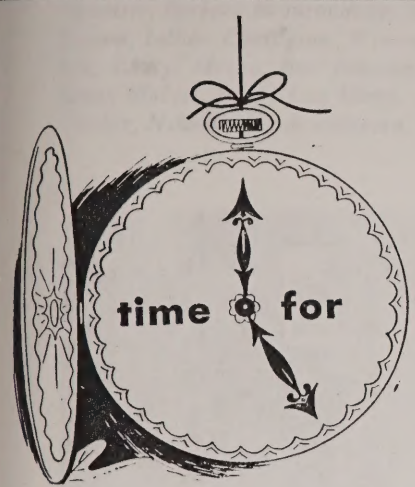
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This is the old St. James Episcopal church . . . a wooden structure that stood on the present site until 1893, when it was moved to the northern side of Convention Street . . . remaining there until the present church was completed.



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French, was a member of the first vestry of St. James, 1843-44.

We also quote from an article on "Mrs. Zachary Taylor in Baton Rouge" by Margaret Schoenbrodt: "Mrs. Taylor was a member of the Protestant Episcopal Church and felt keenly the absence of one in Baton Rouge. She chose a room in one of the garrison buildings which, under her personal supervision, was transformed into a suitable little chapel. She engaged the services of a rector to preach occasionally. In this way she was one of the founders of the Episcopal church in Baton Rouge."

A visit from Bishop Leonidas K. Polk on January 29 of 1843 to confirm five persons, resulted in a definite determination to permanently establish an Episcopal Church. On Feb. 26, 1843 this group was organized and on March 25, 1844 the Legislature granted a charter to "St. James Episcopal Church, Baton Rouge, La." St. James Parish was admitted into union with the convention of the Diocese of Louisiana on June 15, 1844 . . . The first Vestry of St. James Church, 1843-44, includes the following names: Senior Warden, F. D. Newcomb; Junior Warden, William Markham, Jr.; Vestrymen, Cor-

nelius French, William Fulton, Alfred Gates, Daniel Avery, A. A. Williams.

The corner stone of the first church, was laid on June 26, 1845 with the Rev. Mr. A. H. Lamon of West Baton Rouge officiating. This was a wooden structure situated on the same site of the present brick building up until 1895 when it was moved across the street to clear the lot for the build-

(Turn to page 8)

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The first and second grades at St. James Church school are shown here. The members in the picture include: Deborah Bacot, Mimi Barnum, Barbara Bohne, Raymond Burton, Julia Anne Carter, Linda Fay Cowart, John deBessonnet, Patrick Moorman, Francis Noland, David Stafford, Ann Wax, Susie Thibodeaux, Cleie Thibodeaux, Patty Woodward, Label Addison, Margaret Barr, Henry Barousse, Barbara Beauoudray, Alice Branch, Robert Brooke, Joseph Brown, Lillian Covington, Winston Day, Dale Desselle, Tara Flanagan, Cheryl Horan, Ben Johnson, Richard Loftin, Barbara Lyman, Susan Mahier, Prudy Lou Many, Alan Nicholson, Keith Pipkin, Ann Tucker, Nellwyn Vordenbaumen, Kirk Williams, III, Phillips Witter.



This is the kindergarten class of St. James' Sunday School. First Row, left to right—Kitty Barr, Donnie Williams, Carolynn Pipkin, Virginia Bailey, Suzanne Pace, Patricia Vince, Richard Boudreaux, Rodney Barner. Second Row, left to right—Beverly Lyman (not seen), Dwight Lyman, Nancy Wood, Nancy Spencer, Tre' House, Norvel Patton, Dixon Brooke, Jr., Frank Moore, Danny Cornelison, Virginia Kroenke, Fred Kroenke (not seen). Third Row—Martha Rivers, Mary Spencer, Gloria Branch, Patrick Lee, Charles Vaught, David Haase, Frank Jones, Coria May, Paul Macmurdo. Back Row—Emily Wray Robinson, Vernon Porter Middleton.



This appealing picture shows the nursery class at St. James Church School, Mrs. A. deBessonnet, teacher. Left to right—Fred Attaway, John Boudreaux, Daryl Cheatman, Cissie Howe, Kenneth Kahao, Martin Kahao, Keavin Terrell, John Lejeune, Jayne Middleton, Michael Morryman, Kathy McCornack, Jane Ogden, Charles Rivers, Cathy Romero, Bob St. Amant, Myra Schilling, Ronnie Spann, Judy Stewart, George Vorderbaumen, Jr., Monty Walshe, Carol Ann Berry, Jimmy Macmurdo, Raymond Clay, Lary Louise Woodside, Sharon Torrence, Gloria Jean Robertson, Marnia Kennon, Becky Thibodeaux, Susan Kemp, Frank Rieger, III, Janie Golsan, Judy Billings.



Pictured here are two of the smallest members of the St. James congregation, Frank Jones, son of Dr. and Mrs. Frank J. Jones, and Virginia Bailey, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James Bailey. Incidentally, this picture was taken on Virginia's birthday.



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A GLIMPSE

(Continued from page 6)

ing of the present church. The new church was begun under the leadership of the Rev. Mr. Joseph J. Cornish, then rector, and a group of loyal vestrymen together with the Rt. Rev. Davis Sessums, Bishop of Louisiana. The building committee consisted of William Garig, S. I. Reymond, O. B. Steele, John D. Fisher, and the Rev. Mr. Cornish. W. L. Stevens, Sr., was the architect and W. H. Miller, the contractor. Charles E. Coates was chairman of a committee on the interior decoration of the church.

We have said much about the men of the church but a special tribute must be paid to women's work for St. James . . . During the trying time of the War Between the States, for five years from 1861-1866, the church was without clergy supply. (Even the church's Bishop—Bishop Leonidas K. Polk—had volunteered for service in the Confederate army, becoming a General with a military record of distinction.) During this shortage of manpower, it is recorded that the women of the church kept the church school going. "Had it not been for Miss Cornelia French and some of the ladies, the Sunday School could not have carried on." Many comments on the work of the "ladies of St. James" show that they did a lion's share of the work. The "Ladies Aid Society" finally became the Pastoral Aid Society, the Altar

Guild, and the Woman's Auxiliary. These were merged into one large organization in 1929 called the Woman's Auxiliary with a unified plan for work in all fields of service of the church.

Since the War Between the States, two other wars—World War I and World War II—have taken a toll of the young men communicants of St. James who served with valor. Many beautiful memorials in the church have been placed "to the glory of God" and in memory of these and other dear departed. Listing these memorials for the Centennial Booklet of 1944 disclosed many interesting facts in the history of St. James, reflecting chronological events in the church's history.

St. James has had the following assistant rectors: The Rev. Richard Baker, now Bishop Coadjutor of South Carolina; the Rev. George Provost, the Rev. John L. Womack, the Rev. Iveson B. Noland, now Suffragan Bishop of Louisiana; the Rev. Warren G. Fry, the Rev. Robert C. Witcher, the Rev. Robert Owen.

St. James has given many young men to the ministry of the church. Among these Julius Pratt, John L. Womack, James Barnett, James Jenkins, and Iveson B. Noland who was recently consecrated the first Suffragan Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana.

The present rector of St. James, the Rev.

Phillip P. Werlein, has just completed 17 years of outstanding service, during which time two new missions have been organized as part of his program of evangelization and expansion. The first of these, Trinity Mission, in less than three years became a church parish under the able leader of the rector, the Rev. Stratton Lawrence.

The Second, St. Augustin's Mission in North Baton Rouge, began in 1952 with the assistant rector of St. James, the Rev. Robert C. Witcher as missionary, has now been fully organized with regular services being held. Lots have been purchased and plans for a building have been drawn up. Mr. Witcher has been placed in charge.

Although church expansion means that many communicants from St. James have been absorbed into these new areas, this has been offset by an appreciable addition of new members at St. James due to the rapid growth of the population of Baton Rouge and the untiring efforts of Mr. Werlein in welcoming and enlisting new members.

A program of remodeling and expansion has been completed of the physical plant of St. James which has given increased space and greatly improved facilities for the work of the church. This was made possible by the gift of an adjacent building in 1950 which enlarged the church properties materially.

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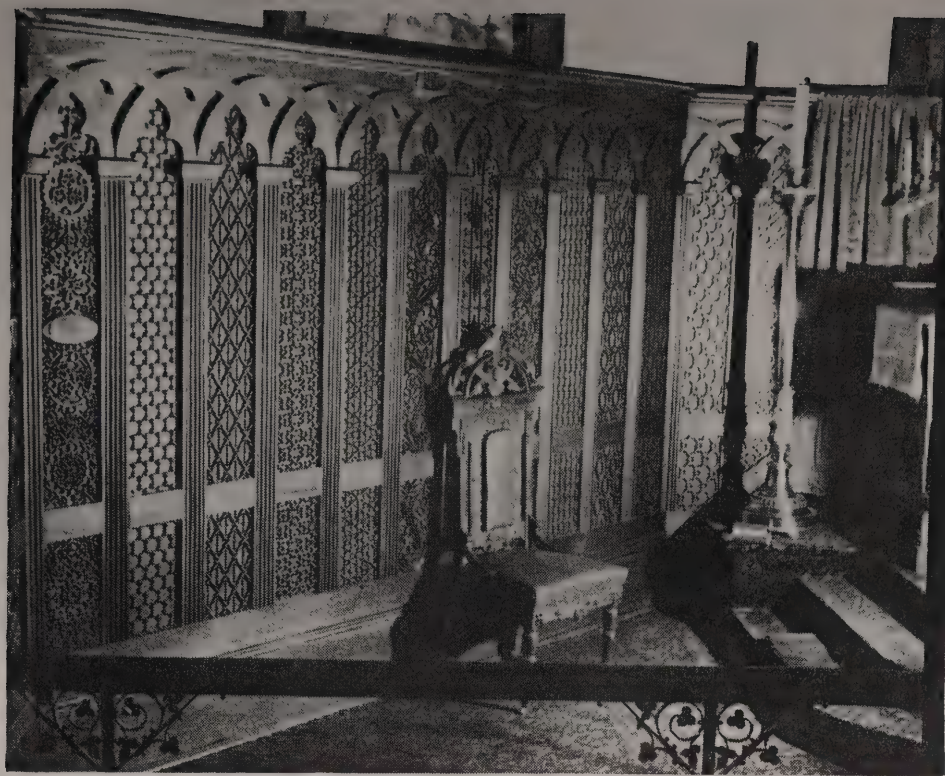
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Shown here is the St. James Parish House which was bought from the Knights of Pythias Fraternal Order in 1922 . . . built by Major Samuel M. Hart, who lived there during the Civil War, it was later owned by David French Boyd, the second president of LSU, and still later John D. Fisher bought the house and made his residence there. The latest remodeling program has made the Parish House very modern with a large reception hall, and modern kitchen downstairs, and rooms for the primary grades of the Church School, upstairs.



The beautiful carvings which ornament the chancel panels were executed by the Rev. Joseph L. Tucker. At the time of his death in 1906, three of the panels were unfinished and these were completed by his son, the Rev. Louis Tucker, who succeeded him as rector.

a vital force in the life of Baton Rouge. Many of its distinguished clergy, vestrymen and influential laymen have contributed largely to the betterment of the community in business, professional and daily affairs as the years have passed . . . one hundred and ten years to be exact—in Baton Rouge's march of time.

MR. PERCY

When the vestry of St. James Spiscopal church reluctantly accepted the resignation

of J. H. Percy as senior warden on December 8, 1952 they said in resolution they were "mindful of the fact that no human being is indispensable to any organization to which he belongs but is of the opinion that Mr. Percy comes very close to being so." They accepted his resignation with "genuine and keen regret" and further resolved that he "be and hereby is elected senior warden emeritus of the church and that this resolution shall give evidence of the earnest desire

on the part of the vestry that Mr. Percy participate in all deliberations of the church's affairs so long as he desires to do so." . . . He had been a member of the vestry from 1918 to 1952.

The dynamic businessman has been a member of the Episcopal church for some 83 years, having been baptized in St. John's church in West Baton Rouge and having been confirmed in St. John's church at Lau-

(Turn to page 11)



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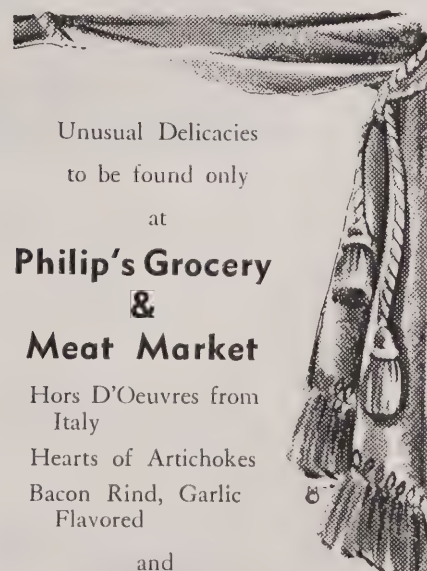
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This interesting group includes the Junior Choir members of St. James Episcopal Church. The choir is directed by Mr. J. Forrest West, with Mr. John F. Waymouth, as organist. First Row, left to right—Penny Patton, Louise Pace, Cynthia Phillips, Carol Anne McKay, Janice Stafford, Ella Claire Zimmer, Clair Romero, Belinda Tully, Carroll Alden, Crucifer. Second Row—Sandra McDougall, Anne Giraitis, Marcella Covington, Billy Bryant, Karen Fogg. Third Row—Lynn Gamble, Gay Gamble, June Everett, Hope Hobdy, Suzanne Patton. Fourth Row—Toby Nicholson, Malcolm Phillips, Bill Nicholson, Tommy Tucker. Others not in the picture include: Katherine McGehee, Jean Dell Gamble, Judy Cole, Linda Henderson, James Carter and Beverly Covington.



This beautiful son and daughter combination belong to Mr. and Mrs. Samuel M. Cashio. Shown as photographed by STEFAN. They are Jackie, age four and Bruce, age 15 months. They have two older brothers.

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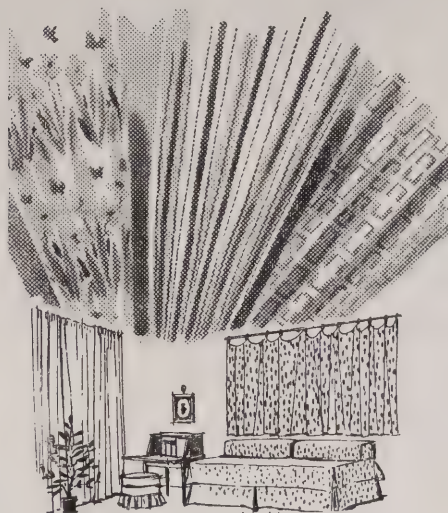
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MR. PERCY

(Continued from page 9)

rel Hill in 1886 by Bishop John Nicholas Galleher. He was a member of Grace Episcopal church in St. Francisville before coming to Baton Rouge in 1909. His recollections of the church as it was in that year is of a very small but devout congregation.

Mr. Percy has served as vestryman under many rectors including the Rev. J. G. H. Spearing, the Rev. Royal K. Tucker, the Rev. Malcolm W. Lockhart, and the Rev. Philip P. Werlein. He was superintendent of the Sunday School during the tenure of Mr. Lockhart.

Mr. Percy was a delegate to the diocesan convention for many years and went as delegate to the General Convention of the Episcopal church five times.

Mr. Percy became a member of the vestry on April 9, 1918 and was elected a junior warden on January 22, 1936. He served as such until January 22, 1940 when he was elected senior warden. In addition to his fore-going duties, he participated actively as a member of the finance committee of the



J. H. Percy is the senior warden emeritus of the St. James Episcopal church.

church and in each "every member" campaign held annually.

It is easy to understand why the vestry, in

accepting his resignation, were cognizant of his "peerless leadership" in the affairs of St. James church" . . . and termed him a "consecrated Christian, tolerant, liberal and sincere" . . . who "loves his church and has given tirelessly of his time and efforts for its betterment."

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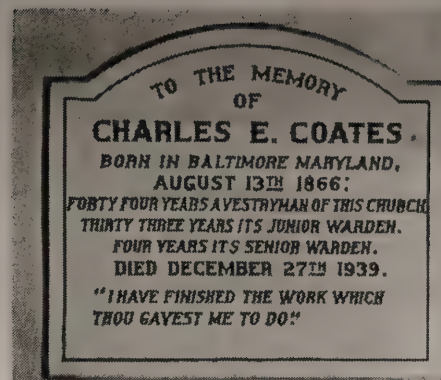
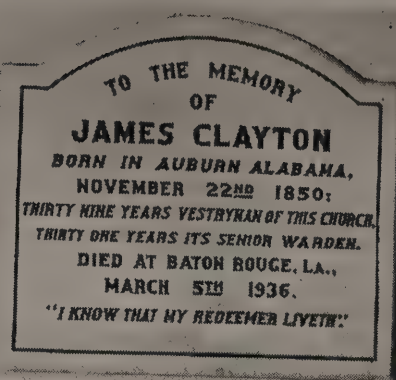
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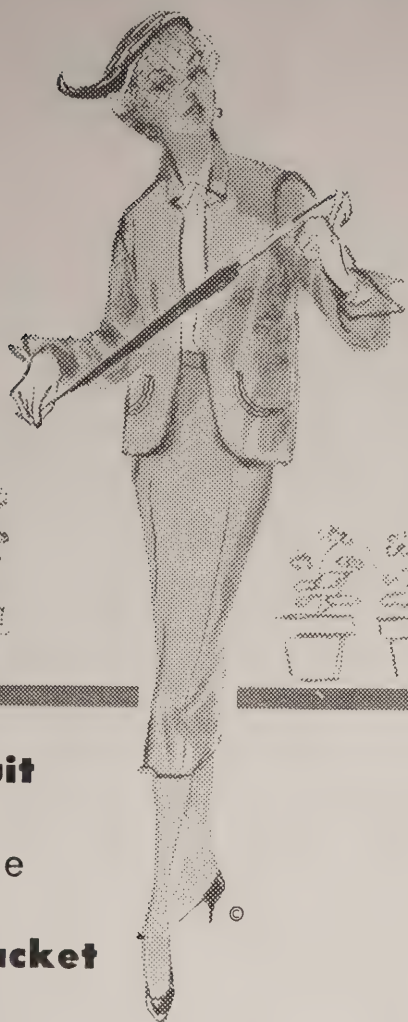
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These three memorial tablets are placed on the left side of St. James Church . . . they were erected to the memory of these three men who had served the parish faithfully and well. William Markham was one of the original incorporators of St. James Church. In 1897 this tablet was removed from the old church and placed on the walls of the present building. In 1935 the vestry placed this tablet in memory of James H. Clayton in the church. And in 1940 a memorial tablet was also placed in the church, in memory of Charles E. Coates.



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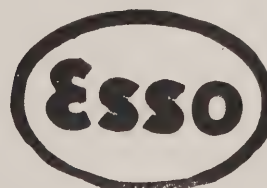
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